

Br

P. l

K

MENS MEETING in *Bristol*, *Society of Friends*

The 20th of the 7th Month, 1772.

IT having been recommended,
by the Yearly Meeting held
in *London*, to distribute among
Friends such Books as may be
likely to be useful, in that which
is of the highest Importance;
This Tract, tho' small, has ap-
peared to us to be comprehensive,
and well worthy of a careful Pe-
rusal. We therefore, in brotherly
affection, recommend it.



TO THE YOUTH
OF
NORWICH MEETING.



DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

LET me request your attention to the following lines. The subject nearly concerns you. Despise not the counsel of One who has often looked upon you with tender regard, and been secretly engaged on your account, that the many gracious visitations of Divine love and mercy to you might be affectionately received, and duly prized by you. If you sincerely embrace them in humble resignation, and faithful obedience, the power of Truth will preserve you, and the fresh springs of Life increase, and establish you in the saving knowledge of God; but if you chuse the ways of the world, and walk after the sight of your eyes, and the imaginations of your hearts, rejecting the gentle drawings and inward reproofs of his holy Spirit, you not only forsake your own mercies for lying vanities, but also put a high indignity and

and affront upon the Sovereign Majesty, the great Judge of the Quick and Dead, who is every where a present Observer of our conduct, and too jealous of his Honour to suffer, without displeasure, the froward will of the Creature to have the preference in any, to his just and holy Will; and who will not force those into Felicity who refuse his gracious Offers.

Unless you take up your daily cross to selfish indulgences, and carnal gratifications, you cannot be the disciples of Christ, nor inherit those enjoyments which are of a divine and permanent nature. "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye thro' the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons, or children, of God." Rom. 8. To follow the Lamb, whithersoever he leads, is the only way to true and lasting happiness, notwithstanding the deceitful flatteries of a degenerate World, and the delusive persuasions of corrupt nature, to the contrary.

The subtil Enemy of your peace begins with fair shews, and plausible temptations, in things which, to inexperienced minds, appear of small concern. He knows, should he at once attempt you with manifest iniqui-

ties, and obvious impieties, it would shock your tenderness, and defeat his destructive intentions. He therefore seeks first to ensnare you, by secretly operating upon the complacency of your natural tempers, and your aversion to give disgust, by putting forward and heightening your natural desires, rather to please than profit yourselves and others, in your deportment and converse; and also to betray you into an ill-grounded shame of godly conversation, and pious walking, and a breach of the due adherence to those distinguishing peculiarities which the Truth has led its faithful followers into, and placed as an exterior hedge of preservation about them. These the blind world calls affected singularities, and clownish absurdities, and styles the disregard and disuse of them, an innocent freedom, and prudent demeanour. Thus the insidious adversary leads first into partial compliances, and proceeds by making every succeeding step, towards a captivating conformity, appear trivial, and of no consequence. By this means he deludes the weak and unwary, gradually to assimilate with the world, in language, in dress, in behaviour, in the superfluity and folly of its modes and fashions, in its corrupt associations, and poisonous diversions, the natural tendency of all which, is to entangle, darken, and debase the mind, and by alienating it from

from the Light and Life of Christ, to render it so unguarded as to make way for the introduction of unsuitable connections, unhappy marriages, and in brief, every kind of corruption and misery.

Be entreated therefore to beware, in time, of every approach towards a false liberty in the smallest matters, lest they prove introductions to greater. Guard strictly against every thing that would lead you to slight the tender touches and convictions of Divine Grace. Withdraw from alluring objects. To tamper at all with temptations, is to lose ground. 'Tis vain to imagine you can go what length you please, and no further; that you may securely temporize to a certain degree, or to just such a pleasing point of compliance as you are now tempted to, in behaviour, dress, and language, in order to appear genteel, candid, well bred, intelligent, polite, and to escape the disagreeable sensations of false shame, and the reflections of being stupid, mulish, and Quaker-like. This leads into liberty, but it is the liberty of the flesh, which is in reality the bondage of corruption.

Content not yourselves with a birth in the Society; but seek to secure a birthright in the Truth; without which the first will not avail

avail you in the sight of God. Let the Spirit of Truth govern your inclinations, for whatever inclination you give your affection to, or passionately espouse, will prove your master. Indulge not an eager curiosity; it led Dinah to dishonour, and became the ruin of a City. Be cautious of your company; for that will affect both your manners and character, and eventually your future State. Humour not the carnal mind in dressing your mortal changeable uncertain bodies, beyond what Truth warrants, and decency requires; for more is not decoration, but disguise, which in the ultimate runs into deformity, and administers offence to him who resisteth the proud, but increaseth grace to the humble. Flatter not the vanity of those who look for a plural address to themselves, whilst they treat their Maker in the singular number; as if Infinite Omnipotence was less, or less worthy than the poor Creature, whose very breath and being is not one moment at his own disposal.

I would beseech you, who are conscious that you have been already turned aside, or stumbled at the cross, proceed no further, but fly to the great Redeemer, who so wonderfully condescended from the heights of immortal Glory, took a painful humanity upon him, and bled for us, that he might bring

bring us to celestial enjoyments, and for that end trod the most thorny paths, and left us the fairest example of humility, meekness, resignation, purity, and the most perfect plainness in every respect. Slight not the pattern he set, but follow it, for his blessed sake, and the security of your own happiness, shun all the gilded baits, the fair seeming caresses of a delusive world, in small matters as well as great, for they are all one in nature, tho' different in degree. Beware of the little foxes; they crop the tender bud-dings of the Vine of Life. Studiously avoid all friendships, flatteries, formal visits, idle pastimes, and parties of pleasure, which in any measure lead out of the fear of God, divert you from daily attention upon him, and indispose you for humble walking with him.

Who, in their proper senses, would lose an eternal mansion in the heavenly Jerusalem, and paradise of God, for the paltry pleasures and silly satisfactions which must shortly end in everlasting bitterness? Shall the decking of these perishable bodies, the vanity of this uncertain life, the gratification of sense, the lure of idle associates, or the apprehension of derision from persons ignorant of the virtue and power of Truth, or unfaithful to it, have greater impression with you, than the Love of Him that made you,
the

the favour of Him that sustains you, and a state of immutable blessedness with him in the realms of eternal Light and Glory? Make not so miserable a choice and preference, but practically adopt this apostolic advice, "Be not
 "conformed to this world; but be ye trans-
 "formed by the renewing of your minds;
 "that ye may prove what is that good and
 "acceptable, and perfect will of God." Rom.
 12.

To behold blooming youth renouncing those temptations, and appearances of present advantage, which captivate the generality of their cotemporaries, for the sake of that glorious Truth which leads, under the Cross, to the crown immortal, cannot fail of being acceptable to God and good men. "I
 "rejoiced greatly, *saieth the good Apostle*, that
 "I found of thy children walking in Truth."
 "I have no greater joy than to hear that my
 "Children walk in the Truth."

J. P.

23 JY 69

F I N I S.

